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AN

ESSAY

ON THE

MOSAIC ACCOUNT

OF THE

Creation and Fall of MAN.

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AN ESSAY ON THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION and FALL of MAN.

THERE are not a few difficulties in the account, which Moſes has given of the creation of the world, and of the formation, and temptation, and fall of our firſt parents. Some by the ſix days of the creation have underſtood as many years. Whilſt others have thought the creation of the world inſtantaneous: and that the number of days mentioned by Moſes is only intended to aſſiſt our conception, who are beſt able to think of things in order of ſucceſſion.

No one part of this account is fuller of difficulties, than that which relates to man. And ſome learned Jews, as well as Origen, and others among Chriſtians, have ſuppoſed the account before us, not to be a hiſtory, but an allegory. The preſent prevailing opinion is, that what relates to man is fact. And it is argued, that, as the true character of Moſes is that of an hiſtorian; it would be unbecoming his judgment and exactneſs, to inſert an allegory in the midſt of hiſtorical facts, without giving any intimation of it.

I ſhall take the account in the literal ſenſe, and ſhall go over it under theſe ſeveral heads or diviſions. 1. The formation of man. 2. the trial, upon which he was put in paradiſe. 3. the temptation he met with. 4. his tranſgreſſion. 5. the conſequences of that, with the ſentence paſſed by God upon the tempter, and upon the tranſgreſſors, our firſt parents.

1. The

1. The firſt thing in order is the creation of man. For with that I begin, not intending to ſurvey the other works of God, before made.

Gen. i. 26. *And God ſaid: Let us make man, in our image, after our likeneſs. And let them have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth.* 27. *So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.*

This may be reckoned a ſummary account of the creation of man, which is more largely and particularly related again in the next chapter.

And God ſaid: Let us make man, in our image, after our likeneſs.

It is common for Chriſtians to ſay, that here is a proof of a Trinity of perſons in the

the unity of the Godhead. To which others anſwer, that the Jews never underſtood theſe expreſſions after this manner, who always believed one God, and that God to be one perſon only, except when they fell into groſs idolatry, after the manner of their Heathen neighbours. And many learned Chriſtians are clearly of opinion, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not revealed in the Old Teſtament.

Theſe interpreters therefore ſuppoſe, that the ſtile common to Princes, and great men, who often ſpeak in the plural number, is here aſcribed to God. Nor need the conſultation, here repreſented, be ſuppoſed to be between equals. But God may be rather ſuppoſed to declare his mind to his angels, as counſellors. Nor will it be an invincible objection, that in this hiſtory there is no notice taken of the creation of angels. For there follow expreſſions, which may be reckoned to imply their exiſtence, and their dignity, and that they were not unknown to man.

But

But indeed we need not to ſuppoſe any real diſcourſe or conſultation at all. The meaning is no more than this. " All " other things being made, God pro- " ceeded to the creation of man: or, he " purpoſed now, at the concluſion, to " make man." And it may be reckoned probable, that Moſes introduces God, in this peculiar manner, deliberating and conſulting upon the creation of man, to intimate thereby, that he is the chief of the works of God, which are here deſcribed. Or, in other words, according to Patrick upon v. 26. " God not only " reſerved man for the laſt of his works, " but does, as it were, adviſe, and con- " ſult, or deliberate about his produc- " tion: the better to repreſent the dig- " nity of man, and that he was made " with admirable wiſdom and prudence."

It is here alſo worthy to be obſerved, that according to the account of Moſes, a different method was taken in forming man, from that, in which other animals were

were formed. Ver. 20. *And God ſaid: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that has life.* And afterwards v. 24. *And God ſaid: Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beaſt of the earth.* They were produced by the Divine power, and command. But God is repreſented, as making man himſelf, immediately, to denote his dignity, and ſuperior prerogative above the reſt of the creatures.

Still at v. 26. *And God ſaid: Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs.* By which twofold expreſſion, it is likely, one and the ſame thing is intended. For when the reſult or execution of this deliberation and purpoſe is deſcribed and related, it is in this manner: v. 27. *So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him.*

What is the *image*, or likeneſs of God, intended by Moſes, is not clear, becauſe he

he has not diſtinctly expreſſed it: and we may now conjecture things, which were not in the mind of the writer. Nevertheleſs I think, the coherence leads us to underſtand hereby, as ſomewhat ſuitable to the mind of Moſes, *dominion over the reſt of the creatures of this earth*, together with that reaſon and underſtanding, which is a main part of the ſuperiority of the human nature above brute creatures, and qualifies man to rule over them, and ſubdue them, and make them ſubſervient to his own uſe and benefit. So are the words of this 26 v. *And God ſaid: Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs. And let them have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth.* And the eminence of man is thus deſcribed Job xxxv. 11. *He teacheth us more than the beaſts of the earth, and maketh us wiſer than the fowls of heaven.*

V. 27. *So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.* What we are firſt led to obſerve here, as connected with what was juſt ſaid, is that the woman was made after the *image* of God, as well as the man.

And from inſerting, in this ſummary account of man's creation, on the ſixth day, this particular, that *God created man male and female*, it may be concluded, that the woman too was made on that day: which, I reckon, is the general opinion of interpreters: though there are ſome things in the next chapter, containing a more particular account of the formation of man, that might occaſion ſome doubt about it. Patrick, in particular, ſays: " God made woman the ſame day " he made man: as he did both ſexes " of other creatures, and as he made " herbs and plants with ſeed in them, to " propagate their ſpecies.'.

It is always ſuppoſed, that God made man in maturity of body and underſtanding. And ſome have been ſo curious as to inquire, at what age: or what was the age, he appeared to have. And in conformity to the great length of the lives of the antediluvians, they have ſuppoſed, he might have the appearance of a man of fifty or ſixty years of age, according to that time.

V. 28. *And God bleſſed them, and God ſaid unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth.* The Jewiſh writers are generally diſpoſed to underſtand that expreſſion, *be fruitful and multiply*, as implying a precept, univerſally binding. But the coherence rather leads us to underſtand it of a bleſſing, or power: the like to which was beſtowed upon the brute creatures, at v. 22. which are not the ſubjects of a precept.

And here the privilege of dominion over the creatures is again expreſſed, de-

noting it to be common to both ſexes, and deſigned to appertain to their poſterity. *Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth, and ſubdue it. And have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

It follows in v. 29, and 30. *And God ſaid: Behold, I have given you every herb, bearing ſeed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree, yielding ſeed. To you it ſhall be for meat. And to every beaſt of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth on the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat. And it was ſo.* Hence it is argued by many, that meat, or food of animal fleſh, was not uſed before the flood. But that does not ſeem certain. It may be allowed, that for a good while, fleſh was forbore. As animals were made by pairs only, it was not convenient, that any ſhould be ſlain, till they were encreaſed, It may be allowed

lowed alſo, that vegetables were very much the diet of thoſe who lived before the flood: when, probably, all things were in greater vigour and perfection, than afterwards. But here is no prohibition of animal food. And it is obſervable, that Abel, and Seth, and all who were of the family of God, were keepers of cattle. And, if they were not allowed to make uſe of them for food, it would be difficult to ſhew, how keeping cattle, not fit for draught, or burden, eſpecially in any large number, could turn to a good account. If it be ſaid, they might uſe their milk: I anſwer, that is more than is clearly expreſſed in the grant. Moreover, ſacrifices of living creatures were in uſe very early. It is not reaſonable to think, they were all whole burnt offerings. It may be reckoned probable, that they who brought to God ſacrifices and offerings of living creatures, did partake of their offerings: which, certainly, was the cuſtom in after times.

The

The firſt chapter of Geneſis concludes thus: *And God ſaw every thing that he had made: And behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the ſixth day.* Every thing was now formed, according to the will, and purpoſe, and command of God. And every part of each day's creation, man in particular, was good, and ſuch as God approved and deſigned.

Thus we have ſurveyed the ſummary account of man's creation, which is in the firſt chapter of the book of Geneſis. At the beginning of the ſecond chapter is introduced an account of the ſabbath, and a deſcription of paradiſe, which I forbear to inſiſt on: but I would obſerve what is farther ſaid of the formation of the firſt pair.

Ch. ii. 7. *And the Lord God formed man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life. And*

man

man became a living ſoul. Man is made of the *duſt of the ground.* But thereby is ſuppoſed to be meant moiſt earth. And whereas it is ſaid, *God breathed into him the breath of life,* which is not ſaid of any other animals: it is hence argued, that the ſoul of man is different from the body, and that it is a more excellent ſpirit, than that of brute creatures.

V. 18. *And the Lord God ſaid: It is not good, that the man ſhould be alone, I will make him an help meet for him.* Here, I apprehend, we are led to the ſame obſervation that was mentioned before, upon occaſion of thoſe words, which repreſented God as conſulting about the creation of man. The deſign of thoſe expreſſions was to intimate the great dignity, and ſuperior excellence of man above brute creatures, whoſe creation was before related. In like manner, when God proceeds to the making of the woman, he is repreſented as conſulting, and reſolving, what to do: that the man might be the more ſenſible of the goodneſs

neſs of the creator in providing for him ſo ſuitable a help.

V. 19. *And out of the ground God formed every beaſt of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them to Adam, to ſee what he would call them. And whatſoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.* 20. *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beaſt of the field. But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.* This bringing the living creatures to Adam, and his giving them names, is a proof of his dominion over them.

This repreſentation of things would lead us to ſuppoſe, that Eve was not formed on the ſixth day, but ſome time after, becauſe her formation is here related after the living creatures had been ſhewn to Adam. Nevertheleſs, as before hinted, that argument is not concluſive. Here we have only a more diſtinct account of what was before related in ge-

neral. This may be ſtrongly argued from the ſeventh verſe of this chapter, before taken notice of, concerning the formation of Adam, who, certainly, was created on the ſixth day.

It follows at v. 21. *And the Lord God cauſed a deep ſleep to fall upon Adam, and he ſlept. And he took one of his ribs, and cloſed up the fleſh inſtead thereof.* By this *ſleep*, as is ſuppoſed, all pain was prevented. It is needleſs to multiply words here, or nicely to weigh objections. It ſeems moſt probable, that in the firſt formation there was ſomewhat ſuperfluous in Adam. It has been ſuppoſed, that he had a ſuperfluous rib on each ſide: and that God took away one pair, with the muſcular parts adhering to them, and out of them made Eve.

V. 22. *And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* 23. *And Adam ſaid: This is now bone of my bones, and fleſh of my fleſh. She ſhall be*

called woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out of man.

It has been thought not improbable, that Adam had an exſtaſy, during the time of his deep ſleep, ſhewing him, what was done upon him: which enabled him to ſpeak ſo properly, when Eve was brought to him.

V. 24. *Therefore ſhall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife. And they ſhall be one fleſh.*

This is ſometimes called Adam's prophecy. For certain, if theſe are the words of Adam, he muſt have been inſpired. For he could not at this time, in an ordinary way, have diſtinct ideas of the relations of father and mother. But many good interpreters think, that theſe ſhould rather be underſtood as words of Moſes, who by divine direction here inſerted this law.

V. 25.

V. 25. *And they were both naked, the man and his wife. And they were not aſhamed.* This, certainly, muſt have been the caſe in a ſtate of innocence. And therefore was proper to be mentioned.

And thus concludes the account of the formation of the firſt pair.

2. The next point in order is the trial, upon which Adam was put in paradiſe.

Ch. ii. 9. *And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree, that is pleaſant to the ſight, and good for food: the tree of life alſo in the midſt of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

Of what kind, or for what uſe, *the tree of life* was, we cannot certainly ſay: though the name of it might lead us to think, it would have been of uſe upon occaſion of eating any thing noxious, or for reſtoring decays, and preſerving the vigour of life.

And the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is doubted, why this tree was ſo called: whether it received its denomination from the event: or whether it was at firſt ſo called from the deſign, for which it was made and inſtituted, that it might be a trial of man's virtue.

In the 8. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. verſes is the deſcription of paradiſe, which I paſs over.

V. 15. *And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dreſs it, and to keep it.* Not that he was made out of paradiſe, and then brought into it. But, when made, he was placed therein, to keep it in good order.

V. 16. *And the Lord God commanded the man, ſaying: Of every tree in the garden thou mayeſt freely eat.* 17. *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

Adam, as a rational creature, was ſubject to the law and will of God. He was neceſſarily bound by all moral laws and rules, and thereby obliged to love, honour, worſhip his creator, and to love every creature of the ſame ſpecies or kind with himſelf, and to be merciful and tender of inferior beings, in ſubjection to him. But God was pleaſed to try him alſo by a poſitive law. And this would be likewiſe a trial of his virtue. For there can be no doubt, but he was obliged to reſpect this law and reſtraint of his bountiful maker. And if he ſhould diſobey this law, it muſt be owing to ſome defect or failure of virtue. There cannot be conceived any reaſon, why he ſhould tranſgreſs this command, unleſs ſome wrong temper, or evil thought, or irregularity and exorbitance of deſire, (which, certainly, is immoral and ſinful) firſt aroſe in him.

In the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die. Literally, in the original,

dying

dying thou ſhalt die. Which our tranſlators have well expreſſed, *thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

Hereby ſome expoſitors have underſtood death *ſpiritual*, *natural*, and *eternal.* But I do not ſee any good reaſon, they have for it. We ſeem rather to be juſtified in taking it in the ſenſe of *natural* death only, or the diſſolution of this frame, the ſeparation of ſoul and body. We are led to this by the words of the ſentence pronounced after the tranſgreſſion: *Duſt thou art. And unto duſt ſhalt thou return.*

In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die. By which may be meant, that very day thou ſhalt become mortal, and be liable to pains and diſeaſes, which will iſſue in death. Or, that very day thou ſhalt actually die. Which laſt ſenſe may be as probable, as the other.

That is the trial, upon which man was put in paradiſe, and in his ſtate of innocence.

3. The

3. The next point, the third in order, is the temptation, which he met with; the account of which is at the beginning of the third chapter of the book of Geneſis. How long it was after the creation of Adam and Eve, before this happened, is not ſaid. But it is likely, that ſome days had paſſed. The ſerpent found Eve alone, and attempted her in the abſence of the man. Nor would his inſinuations have been received, we may ſuppoſe, if he had ſuggeſted diſobedience to a command, that was but juſt then given.

Ch. iii. 1. *Now the ſerpent was more ſubtle than any beaſt of the field, which God had made.* It is generally allowed, that here was the contrivance and agence of Satan. But Moſes ſpeaks only of the outward appearance: and therein, as I apprehend, refers to, or intends the winding, inſinuating motion of ſerpents. *And he ſaid unto the woman: Yea has God ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the garden?* This is ſomewhat abrupt, and, poſſibly, ſome

ſome other diſcourſe had preceded. However, it is very artful: not denying what was moſt true and certain: but inſinuating, that it was very ſtrange, if ſuch a prohibition had been delivered to them. And, poſſibly, Eve concluded, that ſhe was now addreſſed to by ſome angel, who wiſhed them well.

V. 2. *And the woman ſaid unto the ſerpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.* 3. *But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midſt of the garden, God hath ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of it: Neither ſhall ye touch it, leſt ye die.* By which we perceive, that the woman was well apprized of the command, and the ſtrictneſs of it. And, probably, ſhe was by, when it was delivered: though Adam only be particularly mentioned.

V. 4. *And the ſerpent ſaid unto the woman: Ye ſhall not ſurely die.* 5. *For God does know, that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

Which

Which laſt words may be thought to imply, that Eve was not without an apprehenſion of other intelligent beings, diſtinct from God the creator and man, and of an intermediate order between both.

In this diſcourſe the ſerpent inſinuates a wrong and diſadvantageous opinion of the Deity, as envious of the high happineſs and dignity, which they might attain to. And Eve was much to blame, for admitting ſuſpicions of the benevolence of him that made them.

4. I proceed immediately to our firſt parents tranſgreſſion, the accounts of that and the temptation being cloſely connected.

V. 6. *And when the woman ſaw, that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave alſo to her huſband with her, and he did eat.* This is indeed ſtrange. But from the ſerpent's

inſinuations ſhe had admitted a diſhonourable and diſrepectful thought of the Deity, and then ſoon loſt a juſt regard to the command he had given. She views this dangerous and deadly fruit with complacence. She looked upon this prohibited fruit, till ſhe had an appetite to it, conceived of it as good food, and was taken with its beautiful colour, and poſſeſſed with a perſuaſion, that her curioſity would be gratified with an increaſe of knowledge. And according to the Moſaic account, which is conciſe, when Adam came up, and Eve preſented him with ſome of the ſame forbidden fruit, he took it at her hand, and did eat of it. The account, I ſay, is conciſe. But it was needleſs to be more particular, after the clear account before given of the ſtrict prohibition. Which ſets Adam's fault in a conſpicuous view. Poſſibly, the woman gave Adam an account of what the ſerpent had ſaid to her, and repreſented it to him, with tokens of her approbation. He could have no temptation beyond what had been preſented to the woman,

woman, beſide the addition of her offer of it. Which, as it ſeems, was no ſmall inducement to compliance, and to do as ſhe had done, and whatever ſhould be the event, to ſhare as ſhe did.

V. 7. *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they ſewed* or twiſted *fig-leaves together, and made themſelves aprons.* Upon reflection, their eyes were opened in a different ſenſe from what the ſerpent had ſaid, and they were filled with ſhame, not knowing what to think of themſelves, or how to act. But they ſoon contrived a ſlight garment as for a covering.

V. 8. *And they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, in the cool of the day.* They perceived a briſk motion of the air, coming towards them, with an increaſing ſound, that was awful to them. Or, in the words of Bp. Patrick: "They heard the ſound of the majeſtic "preſence, or the glory of the Lord, "approaching nearer and nearer to the

" place, where they were." *And Adam and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.* They who before had had converſe with God, which was delightful, now retire into the cloſeſt, and moſt ſhady coverts, to avoid the divine appearance.

V. 9. *And the Lord God called unto Adam, and ſaid unto him: Where art thou?* God ſummoned Adam, to appear before him, and to attend to what he ſhould ſay. 10. *And he ſaid: I heard thy voice in the midſt of the garden, and I was afraid, becauſe I was naked. And I hid myſelf.* 11. *And he ſaid: Who told thee, that thou waſt naked? Haſt thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou ſhouldeſt not eat?* Intimating, that doubtleſs that was the occaſion of all this confuſion, and diſorder of mind, and of his ſhineſs of the Divine preſence.

V. 12. *And the man ſaid: The woman, whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me*

me of the tree, and I did eat. He cannot deny his guilt. But he puts it off, as much as he can, upon the woman. And the more to excuſe himſelf to God, he ſays: *The woman, whom thou gaveſt to be with me. . .*

V. 12. *And the Lord God ſaid unto the woman: What is this thou haſt done? And the woman ſaid: The ſerpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* She too endeavours to caſt the blame upon another. And though it was not a full vindication, (far from it) yet it was an alleviation of the fault. It would have been much worſe, if ſhe had eaten of her own accord, without a tempter.

V. 14. *And the Lord God ſaid unto the ſerpent: Beeauſe thou haſt done this, thou art curſed above all cattle, and above every beaſt of the field. Upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life.* 15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed: It ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.*

It is an obſervation of an ancient Chriſtian writer, in Patrick upon v. 14. " That though God inflicted puniſh-" ments upon Adam and Eve, yet he " did not curſe them, as he did the ſer-" pent, they ſtanding fair for a reſtitution " to his favour." Undoubtedly, it muſt have been comfortable to Adam and Eve, to ſee the diſpleaſure of God againſt the ſerpent that had ſeduced them. Nor were they preſently cut off, as the threatening, annexed to diſobedience, ſeemed to import. Yea God ſpeaks of the *woman's ſeed*. Therefore they were not to die immediately, but were to have a poſterity: Meaning by her *ſeed* men in general, or the Meſſiah, and good men, who ſhould prevail againſt the tempter and adverſary, though they would ſuffer ſome injuries through his means: and calling it the *woman's ſeed*, as ſome expoſitors think, to mollify Adam, and prevent his diſpleaſure againſt her, who had led him into wrong conduct.

V. 16.

V. 16. *Unto the woman he ſaid: I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow, and thy conception: in ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth thy children:* that is, I will add to the pain and ſorrow of child-bearing. *And thy deſire ſhall be to thy huſband, and he ſhall rule over thee.* Thy will ſhall be ſubject to thy huſband's. So it was before. But now his authority might be more rigorous, and ſevere, than otherwiſe it would have been. The puniſhment inflicted on Eve is ſuitable to the condition of her ſex.

V. 17. *Unto Adam he ſaid: Becauſe thou haſt hearkened unto the voice of thy wife,* (Where we ſee, what was his chief temptation, and what was the neareſt and moſt immediate inducement to him to tranſgreſs:) *and haſt eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, ſaying, thou ſhalt not eat of it, curſed is the ground for thy ſake. In ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.* 18. *Thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee, and thou ſhalt*

eat

eat of the herb of the field. 19. *In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground: for out of it waſt thou taken. For duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return.*

This part of the ſentence, *returning to the duſt*, or dying, muſt be ſuppoſed common to both, the man and the woman. And ſo far the firſt ſentence takes place. They did not die immediately. But an irreverſible ſentence of death paſſes upon them, which would take place in a term of years, when God ſaw fit.

The reſt of the ſentence or puniſhment inflicted on Adam, is ſuitable to the condition of his ſex, as the woman's was to hers, whoſe province, as the Apoſtle excellently deſcribes it, 1 Tim. v. 14. is to *bear children, and guide the houſe:* whilſt the man has the charge of providing for himſelf and the family by his care, labour and induſtry. The puniſhment therefore laid upon Adam is, that his care, and toil, and labour, ſhould now for the future,

ture be increaſed, beyond what it would have been otherwiſe.

But here ariſe objections, relating to the execution of the ſeveral ſentences pronounced upon the *ſerpent*, the tempter, and the *two tranſgreſſors*. The ſentence upon the ſerpent was: *Becauſe thou haſt done this, thou art curſed above all cattle, and above every beaſt of the field: Upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*

This is thought a difficulty. And it is aſked: Did not ſerpents go upon the belly before? Was not that their ordinary motion always? How elſe ſhould they be ſerpents, if they wanted that which is their proper nature? With regard then to this, and the two other ſentences of puniſhment pronounced upon Eve, and upon Adam, I would obſerve. It ſeems to me probable, that God foreſaw the event: and that though Adam was made innocent and upright, yet he would fall. This being foreſeen, there were diſpoſi-

tions made in the original formation of things, which would be ſuitable to what happened. Therefore the alterations to be made upon the tranſgreſſion of the firſt pair, were not very great and extraordinary. That is, there needed not any great alteration in the form of ſerpents, nor in the woman's make and conſtitution, nor in the temper of the ground, to accompliſh what is mentioned as a puniſhment upon each.

Serpents there were before the fall, as is manifeſt. And their winding, inſinuating motion is referred to. Nor did God now, after the fall, create any new ſpecies of plants, as *thorns and thiſtles*, to exerciſe Adam's patience. There were already formed plants and herbs, that were not immediately uſeful for food, and would occaſion an increaſe of labour and toil. And doubtleſs there were alſo lions, and tigers, and other like creatures: all originally made within the compaſs of the ſix days creation, and all good, and wiſely deſigned, as a reſtraint upon

upon man, according as his temper and circumſtances ſhould prove: to humble him, and to render him ſenſible of his weakneſs in himſelf, and his dependance upon God: and to make him thankful for all his diſtinctions, that he might be induced to give the praiſe of all his prerogatives and pre-eminences to him, from whom they came: who had made him to differ, with advantage, from the reſt of the living creatures of this earth: but had alſo ſhewn, in a proper meaſure, his wiſdom and power in them, as well as in him, and indeed is wiſe and holy, great and admirable in all his works.

Nor does it appear, that the whole earth, though fitted for great fertility, was made paradiſaical. For, according to Moſes, Paradiſe was a *garden*, a ſpot of ground, *which God planted*, a certain diſtrict or territory, deſigned for the accommodation of man and the living creatures with him, in a ſtate of innocence. When Adam therefore was turned out of paradiſe, he would find a difference.

It follows at v. 20. *And Adam called his wife's name Eve, becauſe ſhe was the mother of all living.*

When this was done, is not abſolutely certain. Moſes does not ſay, when. And as he ſeems not always to keep the order of time, it may be queſtioned, whether this was done very ſoon after the ſentence had been pronounced upon them: or not till after the woman had brought forth, and was the mother of a living child.

V. 21. *Unto Adam alſo, and to his wife, did the Lord God makes coats of ſkins, and clothed them.*

It is very likely, that this is not mentioned in the order of time. For it precedes the account of expelling Adam and Eve out of paradiſe: whereas it cannot be eaſily ſuppoſed, that it was done ſo ſoon. It muſt be reckoned probable, that immediately after the tranſgreſſion

of our firſt parents, and pronouncing ſentence upon them, they were driven out of paradiſe. But *coats of ſkins* could not be had, till ſome time after the fall. For as all the brute creatures were made by pairs, ſome time muſt have been allowed for their increaſe, before any could be ſlain in the way of ſacrifice, or otherwiſe.

Some of the Jewiſh writers indeed have underſtood this literally: *that unto Adam and his wife God did make coats of ſkins, and clothed them:* that is, he *created* for them ſuch garments. Then, there would be no occaſion to take from any of the beaſts. But the more likely meaning is, that by Divine inſtruction and direction they made to themſelves coats of ſkins. And it may be ſuppoſed, that they were but rough and unpoliſhed.

Underſtand theſe words, as we generally do, that by Divine inſtruction, and with the Divine approbation, Adam and

Eve

Eve clothed themſelves with the ſkins of ſlain beaſts, of ſheep, or goats, or other living creatures: I ſhould be much inclined to think, that Moſes inſerted this particular, as evidence, that God himſelf approved of clothing the body with proper and ſufficient covering, as a ground and foundation of that decency, which is neceſſary to be obſerved by ſo ſociable a creature as man, and in his preſent circumſtances. And if the rough ſkins of beaſts were uſed then, a more agreeable, and more ornamental clothing would not be unlawful or ſinful hereafter: when farther improvements in arts and ſciences ſhould be made by the wit and induſtry of man: provided it were but ſuitable to the ability and condition of perſons. And, for certain, a great variety of circumſtances was very likely to ariſe in a numerous race of beings.

I ſay, if this be the meaning of the words, as they are generally underſtood, I ſhould be much diſpoſed to think, that Moſes inſerted this particular, to prevent all

all ſcruples upon this head. For though a thing be in itſelf reaſonable, and highly expedient: yet there is nothing, that ſo effectually puts objections to ſilence, as a Divine precept or precedent.

However, there is a very learned and diligent Expoſitor † of Scripture, who explains this text in a different manner. He does not deny, that the original word is uſed for *coat* or *clothing:* But yet he thinks the word rendered *coats* ſignifies *tents* or *tabernacles:* which would be more needful than clothing in that warm climate, near paradiſe. Nor would the firſt pair, he thinks, need there ſo thick and heavy a clothing as that of the ſkins of beaſts. Nevertheleſs, I do but juſt mention this ſenſe. For that of our tranſlation is generally approved of both by Jewiſh and Chriſtian interpreters.

V. 22. *And the Lord God ſaid: Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.*

Calvin's

† Vid. J. Cleric. Comm. in Gen. iii. 7. et 21.

Calvin's remark upon this verſe is exactly to this purpoſe: "Whereas ‡, ſays "he, many Chriſtians from this place "draw the doctrine of a Trinity of per-"ſons in the Deity, I fear, the argu-"ment is not ſolid." So that great man. And indeed, though Moſes gives no particular account of the creation of angels, yet their exiſtence is ſuppoſed in ſeveral parts of this hiſtory. And what reaſon could there be for ſaying, upon this occaſion, that man was become like one of the Divine Perſons? It may therefore be reckoned very likely, that here is a reference to the angelical order of beings, ſuppoſed to be more perfect, and more knowing, than man.

Still v. 22. *And now leſt he put forth his hand, and take alſo of the tree of life, and live for ever.*

The expreſſion is elliptical. Somewhat is to be ſupplied, and to this effect. "Now

‡ Quod autem eliciunt ex hoc loco Chriſtiani doctrinam de tribus in Deo perſonis, vereor ne ſatis firmum ſit argumentum. *Comm. in Gen.* iii. 22.

" Now care muſt be had, that he take " not of the tree of life, and live for " ever." This ſeems to imply, what was formerly hinted, that the tree of life was ſalutary, and healing, and might be uſeful, in caſe of hurts, and injuries, and decays. But man having tranſgreſſed in eating of the fruit forbidden him, and having incurred the threatened ſentence; (which too had been pronounced upon him:) it was by no means fit, he ſhould eat of the tree of life: the fruit of which might have rendered him immortal, or however prolonged his days to a period, that was not ſuited to the circumſtances, into which he had brought himſelf by wilful tranſgreſſion. There is an alluſion to this deſign, or this virtue of the tree of life in Rev. xxii. 2. *And in the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and on either ſide the river was there the tree of life. . . . And the leaves of the tree were for healing the nations.*

V. 23, 24. *Therefore the Lord God ſent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till*

the ground, from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man. And he placed at the eaſt of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming ſword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The deſign of all which ſeems to be to intimate, that the ſentence of death, pronounced upon man, was peremptory and irreverſible. He was by no means to attain to immortality in this world, but ſuffer the change of death, or the diſſolution of ſoul and body, and return to the duſt, out of which he was taken.

The text ſpeaks expreſſly of *man* only. But all allow, that the *woman* is included, and muſt be underſtood. And are we not alſo to conclude, that the living creatures were all to follow Adam, and leave paradiſe? There was no need to mention them. They accompanied him, who had dominion over them.

Man

Man is ſent forth *to till the ground*, in doing which he would have more labour, than he would have had in paradiſe. His employment is deſcribed by *tilling the ground*. For that would be his main work, as his diet, for ſome while at leaſt, would be chiefly vegetable. At the entrance into Eden, by which Adam was driven out, were placed cherubim, or angels, with a bright appearance, more than ordinary, which rendered it awful.

It would be too curious, I apprehend, to inquire what became of that delightful garden, or ſpot of ground, in which Adam and Eve were firſt placed by their bountiful maker. If it ſubſiſted for a while, it may be ſuppoſed to have been deſtroyed by the flood, and poſſibly before.

I have now ſurveyed the account of the creation and fall of man. And though I have not made uſe of the notion of its being allegorical, which uſually leaves

too much room for fanſy, and for a variety of imaginations, many of which, if not all, would be conjectural; yet, poſſibly, all is not exact hiſtory, nor every thing put in the order of time.

One inſtance of this, I think, we have plainly ſeen in the latter part of this chapter: where God's *making coats* for Adam and Eve is mentioned before their expulſion from paradiſe: whereas it is very probable, it was after it.

Another thing ſeems to be tranſpoſed in the Moſaic account. The living creatures are repreſented to be brought to Adam, to ſee how he would call them, before Eve was made. But it is not eaſy to conceive, how that ſhould be done on the very ſixth day of the creation, when Eve was made. It might be rather done ſome time after it. But Moſes places that tranſaction, as he has done, the more to ſhew the importance of the woman's creation, though it might in time ſucceed it.

And there might be ſome other things inſtanced in, which need not to be literally taken, as here related, in the utmoſt ſtrictneſs of interpretation.

In this account of Moſes we have the origin of things. It is what ſpeculative minds, in all ages, and in almoſt all parts of the world, have been employed about. God is good. But how to account, then, for evil, is a difficulty, which has greatly engaged, and perplexed mankind.

In this relation of Moſes is ſet before us the origin of moral and penal evil, of ſin, and diſeaſes, and death, of the uncommon pains of child-bearing women, and of the great pains and labour, which man takes for the providing the neceſſaries of life.

And though, as has been owned, the Moſaic account is not free from difficulties, there never was a better given by any. And conſider Moſes only as a Philo-

Philoſopher, or Lawgiver, ſeparate from the character of an inſpired writer, his account of the creation, and of the primitive ſtate of man, and his fall, is worthy of reſpect. And we have reaſon to be thankful for it.

I ſhall now mention ſome obſervations in the way of corollary.

I. All things were originally, as they came out of the hand of God, *good*, and were made by him in great wiſdom.

After the hiſtory of the ſix days creation, and of man in particular, it is added by Moſes, at the end of the firſt chapter of this book: *And God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the ſixth day.* And Solomon having with great diligence employed his active and capacious mind in ſurveying the affairs of this world, and having obſerved many inſtances of vanity and vexation therein, and particularly the great degeneracy of mankind,

mankind, ſays: *This have I found*, of this I ſee reaſon to be fully ſatisfied, *that God made man upright: but they have ſought out many inventions.* Ecc. vii. 29.

II. We are here led to obſerve the dignity of the human nature, which is ſo ſet before us, that it might not be overlooked, but might be regarded, and taken notice of by every one.

Gen. i. 26. *And God ſaid: Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs.* Every word ſhews the dignity of the human nature. God is repreſented as proceeding to the formation of man with deliberation and conſultation. He makes him himſelf. He does not ſay: *Let the earth now bring forth man.* But, *Let us make man.* And ſtill farther: *in our image, after our likeneſs.* His dignity is alſo ſignified in what follows. *And let them have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth.* This thought, of man's having dominion over

all

all things in this earth, and being lord of all the creatures therein, ſeldom occurs, as I apprehend, in Heathen writings: but it is a great and juſt notion, and is a privilege, which man ſtill enjoys in great meaſure.

This notion of the dignity of the human nature leads us to two reflections: Firſt, man, who has been made ſo excellent, and has dominion over other creatures, ſhould act according to his dignity, as reaſonable, and ſuperior to other creatures on this earth, and ſhould ſcorn every thing that is mean, baſe, impure, and cruel.

Another thought, which the dignity of the human nature leads us to, is this: That we can thence argue with great probability, if not with abſolute certainty, that God will not loſe this creature man, or ſuffer him to be for ever, and totally loſt. If man periſh and be loſt, to what purpoſe was this earth formed? And of what uſe are all things therein, if man,

to whom dominion over them was given, be taken away? and if he live not to take pleaſure in, admire, uſe, and emprove, the rich and coſtly furniture, with which this earth is adorned? It is moreover highly probable, that his time on this earth is not the whole period of his exiſtence. So we may argue from the conſideration of the ſuperior dignity of the human nature. And we may ſee hereafter, that the argument is not inconcluſive, but righly framed.

III. All mankind have proceeded from one pair.

Of this we could not be now abſolutely ſure, without ſome good authority, or well atteſted tradition. But it is the account of Moſes, the greateſt Lawgiver that ever was, and an inſpired Prophet of God. The great reſemblance of mankind in the ſeveral parts of the world might be ſome ground of this ſuppoſition. But it would not be full proof. For many pairs, reſembling each other, might

have been formed by God, the Creator, at once, in ſeveral, and remote countries, that the earth might be ſoon peopled thereby. But the account of Moſes, I ſuppoſe, may be relied upon. Nor ought difference of complexion, and ſome other leſſer things, to be reckoned a valid objection. For difference of climates, with the varieties of air, earth, water, and the leſſer or greater degrees of the ſun's heat, will make ſenſible alterations and differences in one and the ſame ſpecies. St. Paul obſerves to the Athenians, that *God had made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.* Acts xvii. 26. And though, as before ſaid, the great reſemblance of the human frame and powers in the ſeveral parts of the world may not be a demonſtrative argument to us, that all came from one pair: yet this account of Moſes is much confirmed by the great agreement between the ſeveral nations of the earth in bodily frame, and intellectual powers, like deſires, and paſſions, and diſeaſes, and in univerſal liableneſs to death.

This

This leads us to two reflections. One is, the remarkable effect of the Divine bleſſing, beſtowing ſuch fruitfulneſs, that by one pair the vaſt circumference of this earth ſhould be gradually peopled, manured, and improved.

The ſecond is, that all men ought to love one another as brethren. For they are all deſcended from the ſame parents, and cannot but have like powers, and weakneſſes, and wants. Solomon ſays Prov. xxvii. 19. *As in water*, or any other mirrour, *face anſwers to face, ſo the heart of man to man*. By conſidering ourſelves we may know others: what they want, how we may relieve and comfort them. And this thought ſhould abate exorbitant pride. For, notwithſtanding ſome differences of outward condition, we have all the ſame nature, and are brethren.

IV. The Moſaic account teaches the only right order of marriage, that is, of one man and one woman.

When the Phariſees came to our Lord with a queſtion about divorce, they being then accuſtomed to polygamy, and to frequent and eaſy divorces, he immediately anſwers them, and puts them to ſilence, by referring them to the Moſaic account of the creation of the firſt pair, and the Divine inſtitution of marriage. Careful obſervations upon the increaſe of mankind have ſhewn us, that the number of males and females born into the world is near equal. Conſequently, great inconveniences would enſue from a perverſion of the right order of marriage. Nevertheleſs nothing can be ſo effectual, to put, and keep things in a right courſe, as Divine authority, like that in the Moſaic account of the creation.

V. Another thing taught in this account of the origin of things is the lawfulneſs, purity, and innocence of the marriage ſtate.

For

For God made man male and female, and marriage was inſtituted in the primitive ſtate of innocence. Ch. i. 27. 28. *And God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God bleſſed them, and God ſaid unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth, and ſubdue it.* Not now to recite again the farther account of the formation of the woman in the ſecond chapter. Doubtleſs this account of Moſes has been of great ſervice in all ages, to remove, or prevent ſcruples, and to reſtrain thoſe, who from miſtaken notions, or wrong views, have been diſpoſed to prohibit, or to diſcourage marriage.

But though all are at liberty to marry, if they pleaſe, yet our Saviour *, as well as St. Paul ‡, ſeems to intimate the commendableneſs of the ſingle life in ſome: if they are maſters of their own purpoſe, and if they prefer it, that they may ſerve God

* Matth. xix. ‡ 1 Cor. vii.

God with leſs diſtraction, and greater freedom from the cares of this life: if they chuſe to deny themſelves, and to give themſelves wholly up to the ſervice of others in ſpreading the principles of religion, or promoting the intereſt of civil ſociety, in any caſes of emergence: provided alſo, that they herein act without oſtentation, and do not over-value themſelves upon this account, nor at all deſpiſe others: then there may be ſome commendableneſs in the ſingle life. Nevertheleſs, after all, it may be reckoned probable, that there are not, and cannot be, many inſtances of the ſingle life with all the above-mentioned qualifications.

VI. The Moſaic account of the origin of things teaches the duty of the ſexes to each other in the marriage ſtate.

This account teaches this, and is deſigned ſo to do. The deſign is ſo apparent, that it may, poſſibly, lead ſome to queſtion, whether there is not ſome

ſtudied contrivance in the narration. And if all is hiſtory, and things were ſo performed, in the order here related, it may be eſteemed unqueſtionable, that things were ſo done, particularly, that God created the man and the woman in this manner, and in this order, on purpoſe to convey theſe inſtructions. So therefore argues St. Paul. 1 Cor. xi. 7. 8. 9. *For the man is the imagè and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.* And in another place. 1 Tim. ii. 12. 13. 14. *But I ſuffer not a woman to teach, or to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence. For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve.* Here he adds alſo: *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the tranſgreſſion.*

Indeed all nations by their own reaſon and obſervation have diſcerned the ſame, and have allotted to men the cabinet of princes, the ſenate, and courts of judicature,

ture, as well as the command of navies and armies. But there are two ways of teaching one and the ſame thing. One is by reaſon, the other is by facts related in a certain order, and clothed with certain circumſtances. And this latter method may be leaſt offenſive, and as effectual, as the other. For compariſons between equals, or nearly ſo, are odious and diſagreeable. Few or none can bear to inſiſt upon majeſty of countenance, bulk and ſtrength of body, compaſs of knowledge, and ſolidity of judgment, as grounds of ſuperiority and pre-eminence: when too there may be on the other ſide advantages of a different kind, that will bring the balance very nigh, if not quite, to an equilibre. The Moſaic narration affords a better, as it is a ſofter argument. Ch. ii. 7. *And the Lord God formed man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life. And man became a living ſoul.* Afterwards, v. 18. *And the Lord God ſaid: It is not good, that man ſhould be alone. I will make*

make him an help meet for him. V. 21. 22. *And he took one of his ribs . . . And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* All which affords excellent inſtruction. And if this account teaches yielding of will and deſire on the one hand, it does as ſtrongly enforce protection, love and tenderneſs on the other: the performance of which, ſuitably, on each ſide, it is likely, will ſecure mutual comfort and happineſs.

VII. Man was put upon a fair and equitable trial, and fell from his primitive ſtate of happineſs by his own fault.

Ch. ii. 16. 17. *And the Lord God commanded the man, ſaying: Of every tree in the garden thou mayeſt freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou ſhalt not eat. For in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

Divines of all denominations, I think, are agreed, that Adam had freedom of will, power to chuſe and to refuſe. Good and evil were ſet before him. Nor was it a difficult thing, to avoid the prohibited fruit. And yet he was induced to eat of it.

VIII. If Adam, who was made upright, was overcome by temptation, we ought to be upon our guard.

This is a duty, inculcated upon all of us by our excellent Lord and Maſter. Eſpecially ought we to guard againſt diſadvantageous and diſhonourable thoughts of the Deity. By this means, as much as any, the ſubtle ſerpent prevailed upon and deceived Eve. Ch. iii. 1. *Yea has God ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the garden?* .... V. 5. *For God does know, that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* All diſhonourable

able ſentiments of God, as unmerciful, illiberal, rigid, and inexorable, except upon terms of ſtrict juſtice, are as falſe, as thoſe here ſuggeſted by the ſerpent, or rather by ſatan: and if hearkened to, will have a bad influence upon us, and lead us aſtray from him, who is the ſource of our happineſs.

IX. The fall of our firſt parents is not only an argument to watch ourſelves, but alſo to watch over others. Says St. Paul 2 Cor. xi. 2. 3. *I am jealous over you with a godly jealouſy. . . For I fear, leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtlety, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.*

X. The ſentence pronounced by God upon our firſt parents for their tranſgreſſion was mild and equitable: or, it was a juſt ſentence tempered with mercy.

The whole proceſs of the judgment ſhews this, as related by Moſes. Firſt,

Adam is ſummoned. He could not deny, that he had eaten the forbidden fruit. But he has an excuſe: not a very good one, yet an excuſe it is. *The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* The woman too had taſted of the forbidden fruit, and had firſt taſted. She likewiſe has an excuſe and apology: and though not ſufficient, yet of ſome moment. *And the woman ſaid: The ſerpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* Still farther, God begins with pronouncing ſentence upon the ſerpent, which muſt have been exceeding comfortable to our firſt parents. And an intimation is given, that the *ſeed of the woman* ſhould prevail againſt the ſerpent: or, that the cauſe of truth and innocence, religion and virtue, and the true intereſt and happineſs of man, ſhould prevail, and take place in the end.

And though afterwards there are diſtinct and ſeveral ſentences pronounced upon each, even upon Adam, and Eve:

and

and the ſentence of death, as common to both: yet they are not immediately deſtroyed, but have time afforded for repentance.

We cannot forbear therefore to obſerve the juſtice and the equity of the Divine Being. Man muſt die, but not immediately. And he would meet with arguments to eſtabliſh his reſolutions for obedience to the will of God, and for performing the duties of his preſent condition. The angels that fell, appear not to have had any mercy ſhewn them. They, it is likely, had no tempter. Herein, then, there is a difference between man and them. God in his great goodneſs and equity conſiders this, and treats man accordingly. This, as well as other things, ſhould induce us to acknowledge the goodneſs of God, and to guard againſt all thoſe ſentiments that impeach it. God is the fountain of goodneſs. God therefore is the moſt merciful, and moſt equitable being in the univerſe.

XI.

XI. The Moſaic account may lead us to think, that ſome magnify the conſequences of the fall of our firſt parents.

The ſin of Adam was the introduction of death, and of the miſeries of this life. And ſo far his ſin is imputed to his deſcendents, that they all become liable to the ſentence of natural death. As St. Paul ſays Rom. v. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin. And ſo death*, a ſentence of death, *paſſed upon all men.* This is not to be denied. Nor is it any impeachment of the Divine juſtice or goodneſs. For God might have made man at firſt mortal, only ſuppoſing a future ſtate: and that all things here, comforts and ſorrows, be deſigned and ordered, as preparatory and diſciplinary for another and better ſtate.

But beſide this, ſome aſſert, that the deſcendents of Adam derive from him a vitiated and corrupted nature, unable and averſe

averſe to good, and inclined to evil. But where is this taught, either in this origin of things, now before us, or in any other part of Scripture? And would not this be, in reality, to make God the author of ſin? Is not this imitating guilty Adam, who ſaid: *The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me, and I did eat?* But if men could allege a vitiated nature, it would be a better apology, than that of Adam. The bad conduct and the ſolicitations of the woman could be no more at the utmoſt than a temptation from without. But nature is inborn, and the man himſelf. If a bad nature be derived to him without his own fault, the evil is paſt remedy, and quite out of his power. And if bad actions flow from a bad nature, he is ſcarce accountable for them. They muſt be put to the account of nature, and the author of it.

Beſides, what reaſon is there to apprehend ſo great an alteration made in the nature

nature and powers of man by Adam's tranſgreſſion? Is there an immenſe difference between Adam and his poſterity? Adam was made innocent. But his virtue was not confirmed. How eaſily were Adam and Eve miſled, and drawn into tranſgreſſion! Is it not very ſtrange, that, in their circumſtances, they ſhould not be ſatisfied, without taſting of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: when the prohibition was ſo expreſs and ſtrict, and they enjoyed great plenty of other things? The poſitive law, delivered to Adam, forbidding him to touch the fruit of that one tree, was a proper trial of his virtue. For it cannot be doubted, that he was obliged to reſpect this law of his Creator. And if he ſhould diſobey it, that muſt be owing to ſome defect or failure of moral virtue, as before obſerved.

Let us, then, not be unwilling to conſider, whether the conſequences of the fall of our firſt parents be not aggravated by

by ſome: and let us be careful, not to admit any ſchemes, which are derogatory to God's honour, and which countenance or juſtify men in their allowed weakneſſes, or wilful tranſgreſſions.

XII. Finally, from the Moſaic account of the origin of things, and the explication, which has been now given of it, we may be enabled to perceive, that the permiſſion of the fall of our firſt parents, with the conſequences of it, is no reflection upon the wiſdom of the Divine Government.

For rational creatures muſt be put upon trial. They cannot be without freedom of will, which may be abuſed. And as our firſt parents did not ſin without a tempter, or of their own motion, as many of the angels ſeem to have done, God in his treatment of them has joined mercy with juſtice. Hence will ariſe glory to God, and good to men. God by his long-ſuffering and patience, and

the inſtructions afforded to them, and other methods of his Providence, the reſult of his unſearchable wiſdom and goodneſs, will bring many of the ſons of Adam to repentance, true holineſs, eminent virtue, and heavenly glory and happineſs, exceeding what could have been enjoyed on this earth, even in paradiſe itſelf.

The virtue of true penitents is ſometimes very great. They gain an eſtabliſhment in the love and fear of God, and a full reſolution for all goodneſs. The ſteady virtue of men amidſt the temptations of this world will exceed the virtue of Adam in paradiſe. It is true, they are not innocent, as he was. But they are upright, and fully reſolved, and they overcome ſtrong temptations. And the moment of their virtue, according to equitable conſtruction, (and ſuch is that of the Divine judgment:) may equal, and even ſurpaſs the virtue of an angel, who has not ſo great temptations. I am

the more led to this, conſidering the great recompences, which God in the goſpel has propoſed to the faithful, the ſteady and victorious in this ſtate of trial. And if we may attain to ſuch excellence here, and ſuch glory hereafter, we are greatly to blame, and much wanting to ourſelves, if we do not *ſtrive againſt ſin* ‡ to the utmoſt, and reſolutely, though humbly, and without oſtentation, maintain our integrity amidſt all the ſolicitations of this world.

‡ Hebr. xii. 4.

The END.

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